

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for managing storage space in one or more data storage devices coupled to a storage area network (SAN), the method comprising:
  - receiving a request for storage space from a requester coupled to the SAN, the request specifying one or more criteria associated with the requested storage space;
  - selecting one of the data storage devices according to volume characteristics of the devices, where the selected device is a device having volume characteristics that best match the one or more criteria specified in the request;
  - returning an identification associated with the selected data storage device to the requester; and
  - creating a communication path between the requester and the selected data storage device.

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